

Claims 31 and 44 have been canceled without prejudice, and claims 26, 28, 32-35 and 41 have been amended. No new matter has been added. For instance, support for the amendments appears in the original claims.

It is also believed that the amendments may be properly entered at this time, i.e. after final rejection, pursuant to 37 CFR 1.116 because the amendments do not raise any new issues or require a new search, and they reduce issues for appeal. Indeed, the amendments incorporate a feature of an allowed dependent claim into independent claims and change certain dependencies and correct a typographical-type error. Entry of the amendments at this time is earnestly solicited.

Claims 28 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

It is believed the amendments of claim 28 and 41 made herein obviate the rejection.

Claims 26-47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 28 and 41 also were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Applicant respectfully traverses that "substantially free of aromatic groups" is somehow ✓ indefinite. In particular, the term is discussed at page 3, lines 15-19 of the application, providing even further clarity.

Claims 28 and 41 have been amended to obviate the rejection and correct the typographical-type error.

In view thereof, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are requested.

Claims 26-30, 35-36 and 40-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 over Allen et al. (U.S. Patent 5,071,730).

Claims 26-30 and 35-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Jung et al. (U.S. Patent 6,391,518).

Claims 47 and 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Jung et al. (U.S. Patent 6,391,518) in view of Thackeray et al. (U.S. Patent 5,968,712).

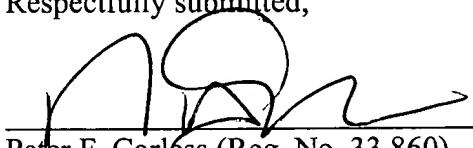
For the sake of brevity, these several rejections are addressed in combination.

While Applicant disagrees with the rejection, it is also believed the rejections have been obviated by the amendments made herein. As discussed above, the pending independent claims have been amended to recite language of a claim indicated to be allowable.

In view thereof, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are requested.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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MARKED VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES

26. (amended) A positive-acting photoresist composition comprising a photoactive component and a polymer that is substantially free of aromatic groups and comprises 1) units crosslinked to other polymer units and 2) photoacid-labile groups, the polymer units being crosslinked by a separate crosslinker component.

28. (amended) The photoresist composition of claim 26 wherein the photoacid-labile groups comprise acrylate esters that comprise a tertiary non-cyclic [alicyclic] group or a secondary or tertiary alicyclic group.

32. (amended) The photoresist composition of claim 26 [31] wherein prior to reaction with the polymer the crosslinker component is an unsaturated compound.

33. (amended) The photoresist composition of claim 26 [31] wherein prior to reaction with the polymer the crosslinker component is a vinyl ether.

34. (amended) The photoresist composition of claim 26 [31] wherein prior to reaction with the polymer the crosslinker component is 1,4-butanedivinyl ether [1,4-butaneidvinyl ether], 1,6-hexanediyether, 1,4-cyclohexane dimethanoldivinyl ether or bis-vinyether ethane ether.

35. (amended) A method for forming a photoresist relief image, comprising:
a) applying a layer of a positive-acting photoresist composition on a substrate, the photoresist composition comprising a photoactive component and a polymer that is substantially free of aromatic groups and comprises 1) units crosslinked to other polymer units and 2) photoacid-labile groups, the polymer units being crosslinked by a separate crosslinker component; and

b) exposing and developing the photoresist layer on the substrate to yield a photoresist relief image.

41. (amended) The method of claim 35 wherein the photoacid-labile groups comprise acrylate esters that comprise a tertiary non-cyclic [alicyclic] group or a secondary or tertiary alicyclic group.